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No 17 /
St Louis May 26th 1808. ---

Sir

The general policy of our Government in relation to the Indian tribes has been so fully impressed on your mind by the conversations which you have had with the Secretary at war with General Clark and myself, as well as by written instructions from the Secretary, that I deem it unnecessary at this moment to dilate on that subject, one point however seems to claim our attention as experience proven its falacy, I allude to the practice of expending the Money of the U States, to keep the Indian tribes at peace with each other, this practice not being founded in right nor and in justice as it respects the U States, nor in sound policy as it respects the Indians, must of course be Abandoned so soon as temporary expediency will permit, for I hold it a consequence inevitable, that should we continue to pay the aggressors for their forbearance to aggress, and the Injured to abstain from retaliation, we at once encourage war amongst the tribes and tax ourselves with the expenditure of considerable sums, to defeat one of the primary objects of our present philanthropic administration, in relation to those unfortunate people which is to induce all those tribes in amity with the U States, and residing in our limits, to remain in peace with each other, you will therefore be guarded in future with respect to expenditures under this head, as we cannot with complacency think of paying for disobedience to our will, I do not however positively Interdict you, from making such expenditures in extreme cases, and where there may be some important object to be obtained thereby, but they must always be made with that sound discretion which I feel confident you possess — You will no doubt perceive that this custom of covering the dead (as it is called) or giving something to the injured nation originated in the defenceless state of the traders who resided amongst the Indians formerly, and the pretext which such an assurance gave the Indians for plundering them, the Indians flattered the traders by assuring them that they looked up to them for protection, the traders received their adulations and promised them that protection which they could not give, of course when a nation was attacked and killed by their Neighbors, the Indian Nation claimed of their resident traders a breach of contract, and compelled them to make what they thought proper to call restitution for the injury they had received, but as the Government of the U States have thought proper, now to extend their protection as well

to the Indians as the traders, they must be held obedient to its will, or suffer the penalties which they may think proper to inflict, and of course the necessity for the continuance of this practice ceases, and ought for many reasons to become obsolete, in order to break down these customs which I do conceive constitute a formidable Barrier to our views, you will urge the Indians by every argument you can suggest, to live in peace with their Neighbours, and assure such as will not conform to our wishes in this respect, that no traders can be permitted to bring them Merchandise, and consequently they will be thus deprived of the means either of making war or defending themselves from the retaliation of others whom they may have injured: tell them that no prisoners will hereafter be brought by the United States from any Indian Nation, and that if they wish to profit by our protection they must take our advice - - - - -

The Savages in this quarter influenced by their own local policy are so frequently removing their residence from place to place, that it appears to me inexpedient to assign you any particular bounds in which to act. I have therefore thought it better to define your powers, point out your duties and name the Nations among whom particularly those powers and duties are to be exercised and discharged, as such you will consider the Soc's Taxes and Tawags - for your general guide and relation to those Nations, you will ~~follow~~ pursue the instructions which you have previously received from the Secretary of war - - Your present mission to the Soc's and Tawags has two principal objects in view, the first is to prevail on those Nations to deliver us the Murderer who killed one of our Citizens at Portage de Soc in the month of April 1807 who has been repeatedly demanded and not yet surrendered to justice, the second is to induce them to settle in an amicable manner the existing differences between themselves and the Soc's and Tawags in consequence of their depredations on those Nations the manner in which both these points are to be settled is fully pointed out to them in my speech to which you are the Bearer, if they comply all is well bring the Murderer to this place in order that he may be delivered up to the Civil Authority to be dealt with according to law, and make the necessary arrangements for the assemblage of the Chiefs of the contending Nations, in order to restore harmony among them, as I have verbally instructed you - - Should the Soc's and Tawags on the contrary refuse

to comply with our wishes on either or both of these of those subjects
You will then order by the power with which you are hereby vested, all the
traders among them of whatever denomination to depart forthwith from the
Villages and hunting camps of those Nations, and bring with you to this place
all the portable property belonging to the U States, at their Aggregated
establishment, the Merchandise belonging to the trading establishment
of Belle Fontaine, together with the Blacksmith and his tools and all
other persons and property in the employment of or belonging to the
U States, that you may find at or near the Said Nations —

Should the Soc^s and Foxes refuse to deliver the Murderer themselves
and at the same time assure you that they will not protect him or
that you are at liberty to take him, you will in such case seize
the Murderer and if he attempts to escape put him to death, but should
you apprehend any danger to yourself or party from such a procedure
or that the Indians are not sincere in their declarations of not defending
him, you will then pursue the course first pointed out, and return as
soon as possible, to this place and give me an account of your
Transactions — — — — —

Lieut Lorrimer with a boat and twenty five men is ordered
to Convey you to such place as the nature of the service on which
you are dispatched may require, also to give you every assistance in
his power, to enable you to fulfill the object of your present Mission

I wish you a pleasant Voyage & safe Return

Accept the assurance of my Confidence and Respect

Y^{rs} Obedt Servt

Marioneth Lewis